

Who Moved My Cheese?

October 1, 2010

- 1 *Who Moved My Cheese?* is a book about four characters. Sniff¹ and Scurry² are mice, and Hem and Haw³ are people. They move around the maze to find cheese to eat. They find a cheese station so full of cheese that they think it is enough to last a lifetime. Suddenly, all the cheese disappears from that station, leaving the four **stunned**. The reality is, it had been gradually **decreasing**, but they had failed to notice it. How they react to this situation is the remaining part of the story.
- 2 Cheese here is a symbol for things we **pursue** in life, such as a job or a relationship. The cheese having disappeared in this parable⁴ represents change.
- 3 Sniff and Scurry are mice, and so have smaller brains than humans. We tend to think mice are less intelligent than human beings. But in reality, smaller brain implies lesser complexity. They don't plan. They act. Sniff and Scurry are ready to handle the cheese crisis. Without second thoughts, they get back to looking for more.
- 4 Hem and Haw are a little bit too **complicated**. They can't help using their brains more. Hem, in particular and as the name suggests, is someone who is afraid of change. Is this not the situation in which we find ourselves most of the time?
- 5 The two little people, however, mope around,⁵ blaming someone for moving their cheese. They claim they don't deserve to be in such a situation. They are not prepared to look again for more, even though it is their only source of survival. Finally, Haw stopped being afraid and went to find new cheese. He left the following messages for Hem:
 - 6 They keep moving the cheese. (Change happens)
 - 7 Get ready for the cheese to move. (Anticipate change)
 - 8 Smell the cheese often so you know when it's getting old. (Monitor change)
 - 9 The more quickly you **let go of** old cheese, the sooner you can enjoy new cheese. (Adapt to change quickly)
 - 10 Move with the cheese. (Change) **Savor** the adventure and enjoy the taste of new cheese. (Enjoy change)

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¹ **sniff**: to breathe in through your nose in order to smell something

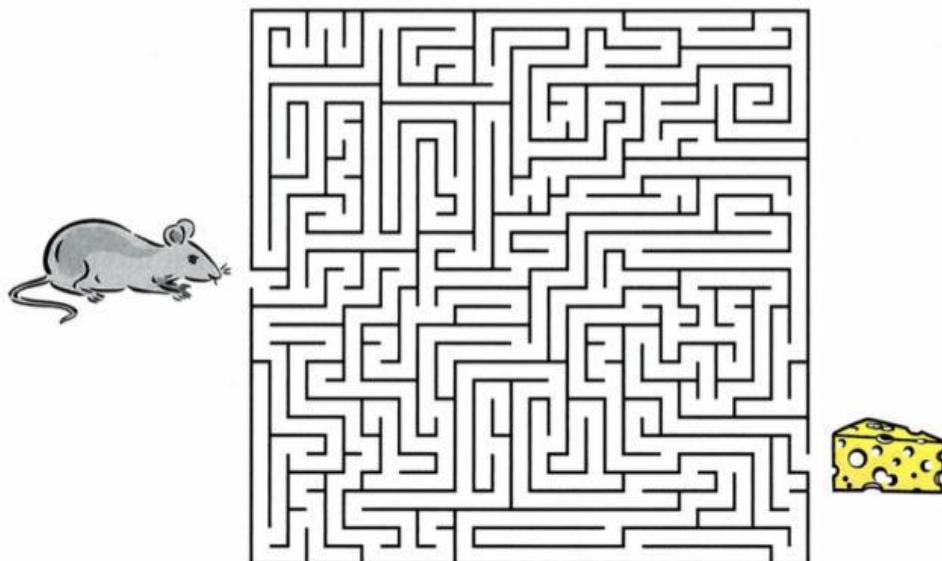
² **scurry**: to move very quickly with small steps

³ **hem and haw**: to hesitate and to avoid saying something directly

⁴ **parable**: a short, simple story that teaches a moral or religious lesson

⁵ **mope around**: to pity oneself and feel sad, without trying to be happier

- 11 Someone will keep moving the cheese. (Be ready to enjoy change quickly, and enjoy it every time)
- 12 Ask yourself: "What would I do if I were not afraid?" Now get going, because a "good enough" solution to a problem is fine. It is much better, in fact, than a "no-solution." Even the best would be futile⁶ if it comes too late. In short, this book, *Who Moved My Cheese?* is very much worth⁷ the read.



⁶*futile*: having no chance of being effective or successful

⁷*worth*: valuable, interesting, helpful

COMPREHENSION

A Main Ideas

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. This story is about ____.
 - a. four mice
 - b. four people
 - c. two mice and two people
 - d. cheese

2. The story takes place ____.
 - a. in a station
 - b. in a maze
 - c. at work
 - d. in a store

3. When Hem and Haw discover that their cheese is gone, they blame someone for taking their cheese and ____.
 - a. start looking for new cheese
 - b. get into an argument
 - c. feel sorry for themselves
 - d. ask the mice for help

4. Haw finally decides to ____.
 - a. stay with Hem
 - b. look for the mice
 - c. find new cheese
 - d. make a plan

5. Haw is able to make his decision because ____.
 - a. he's really hungry
 - b. he's tired of listening to Hem complain
 - c. he wants to find the mice
 - d. he stops being afraid

B Close Reading

Read each statement. Decide if it is **True** or **False** according to the reading. Check (✓) the appropriate box. If it is false, change it to make it true. Discuss your answers with a partner.

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The mice are stunned when the cheese is gone because they didn't realize the amount of cheese was slowly becoming less and less. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The cheese represents what is important to us in life, such as relationships and careers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The cheese disappearing represents our laziness. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The mice react to the "cheese crisis" (no more cheese) by worrying and not doing anything. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. The brains of mice and people are very similar. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Haw learned that change is a natural part of life and we need to accept it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |